

**Testimony of Robert Shea
Acting Director of Operations
Federal Emergency Management Agency**

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Introduction

Good morning Chairman Davis and members of the Committee. My name is Robert Shea. I am the Acting Director of Operations for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). On behalf of FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), I am honored to appear before you today to discuss FEMA, some of our challenges and accomplishments over the past year, and our preparations for the upcoming hurricane season. Related to this, I want to review FEMA's general authority to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters of all types, and FEMA's role and activities in emergency planning.

No discussion of the challenges associated with preparing for this year's hurricane season can take place without mentioning Hurricane Katrina and the defining moment it marked for emergency management. Hurricane Katrina was, without a doubt, the single worst disaster in American history, and it struck during the single worst hurricane season on record. The 2005 hurricane season was historic with its 27 named storms, including four that reached category five. In fact, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were two of the most intense hurricanes ever recorded during an Atlantic hurricane season. The severity of the 2005 Hurricane Season required historic response and recovery efforts by FEMA and all of our partners. FEMA delivered more commodities, activated more response teams, housed more victims, and distributed more money in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita than for any other disaster in American history.

Historic Response and Recovery Efforts for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were two of the most intense hurricanes ever recorded during the Atlantic Hurricane Season. Hurricane Katrina struck Eastern Louisiana and the Gulf of Mississippi, while Hurricane Rita made landfall in Western Louisiana and the eastern Gulf of Texas. Both Katrina and Rita intensified to Category 5 storms while in the Gulf Coast before making landfall as Category 3 storms. While Katrina made landfall on Aug. 29, Rita followed less than a month later on Sept. 23. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia received Presidential emergency declarations following Hurricane Katrina. This total is the most declarations made for a single disaster in FEMA history.

- The (800) 621-FEMA tele-registration and help line ran for more than 4,200 hours straight – 176 days – after Hurricane Katrina struck. Never have the registration and help line call centers operated for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (including holidays) for such a long duration.
- More than 16,000 federal civilian personnel have been deployed to help state and local officials along the Gulf Coast recover from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
- More than 101,000 travel trailers (TT) and mobile homes (MH) are serving as temporary homes for Hurricane Katrina and Rita victims, triple the number of units used following all of last year's Florida hurricanes and far outnumbering any housing mission in FEMA's history. Manufactured housing continues to be moved into the Gulf Coast region to support ongoing housing needs. As of late April, there are 62,000 TTs and MHs occupied in Louisiana.
- Nearly 140,000 roofs damaged by Hurricane Katrina or Rita have been temporarily covered by FEMA's "Blue Roof" program operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers so that families can remain in their homes as they rebuild. More than 100,000 of these were in Louisiana. These are the most roofs covered following a single hurricane in the "Blue Roof" program's history. Additionally, 40,000 roofs damaged by Hurricane Wilma in Florida were covered by "Blue Roofs."
- Households have received financial rental assistance under FEMA's Individuals and Households Assistance Program to pay for apartments. Nearly \$1.8 billion has been distributed in financial rental assistance as part of FEMA's comprehensive housing program. 570,000 Louisiana households received a total of more than \$1.2 billion in financial rental assistance. Overall, more than \$3.1 billion has been provided for housing assistance payments in Louisiana, including rental assistance and reimbursement for repair and replacement costs.
- Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck, nearly 1.9 million housing inspections have been completed in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. More than 1 million of these were in Louisiana.
- Since Hurricane Katrina, 88 million cubic yards of debris have been removed in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana. FEMA reimbursed 100 percent for these expenses for a month or longer in Alabama and Texas and continues to reimburse Louisiana and Mississippi at 100 percent. In Louisiana, 40 million cubic yards have been removed to date for a total of \$1.5 billion in debris removal projects.
- FEMA paid more than \$560 million for hotel and motel rooms to date to provide hotel and motel rooms to tens of thousands of families affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who were in need of short-term sheltering. During its peak there were 85,000 rooms billed to FEMA on one night.

- To date, FEMA has approved \$645 million in Community Disaster Loans for municipalities in Louisiana and Mississippi to help local authorities maintain essential services such as law enforcement, schools and fire services in the hardest hit communities, including a \$120 million loan approved for the City of New Orleans. The total for Louisiana communities is \$545 million in CDs.
- As of late April, more than \$3.2 billion in federal funds have been allocated for Public Assistance projects such as debris approval and emergency services in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This total surpasses the combined total of \$2.6 billion allocated for Public Assistance projects from the 2004 hurricanes that resulted in hurricane-related damage in 15 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- FEMA has provided more than \$6.7 billion directly to Hurricane Katrina and Rita victims for housing and other needs assistance through the Individuals and Households Assistance Program (IHP). The \$5.3 billion provided to victims of Hurricane Katrina alone is the most ever provided by FEMA for any single natural disaster. The combined Katrina-Rita assistance to individuals and households more than doubles the combined total of IHP dollars for the four major Florida hurricanes in 2004, the Northridge Earthquake in 1994 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992. FEMA has paid \$4.6 billion in IHP dollars to more than 900,000 Louisiana households.
- More than \$15.9 billion has been paid out to National Flood Insurance Program policyholders. More than 90 percent of all claims filed have been paid out. More than 94 percent of these claims were paid to Louisiana policyholders for a total of \$13 billion.

Despite our extraordinary and historic efforts, the shortcomings in preparation and response to Hurricane Katrina at all levels of government reinforced the need for and importance of ensuring that planning, coordination, communication, and response efforts are performed with a unity of effort in the face of any type of disaster. FEMA continues to work closely with the Homeland Security Council, Congress, different investigative organizations, and its Federal and State partners to review the lessons learned from last year's and previous hurricane seasons. The many lessons learned and after action reports have been most instructive in helping us prepare for the upcoming season. FEMA will not lose focus on the criticality of improving our capabilities to respond to future disasters. FEMA and the entire Department of Homeland Security are taking the needed actions to ensure that we can effectively, efficiently, and compassionately respond to any hurricanes this summer, or for that matter, to any other disaster. With the latest predictions indicating another active hurricane season in 2006, we are preparing with a renewed sense of commitment and urgency.

FEMA's Role and Statutory Authority to Support State and Local Governments

FEMA derives its primary authority from the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288, as amended (Stafford Act). This act provides the authority for mitigating the effects of natural and manmade disasters, by providing financial assistance to

states; assisting in preparedness and readiness planning with our Federal, State, local, federally recognized tribal and private sector partners; coordinating the Federal response; providing recovery assistance; and utilizing the role of the Federal Coordinating Officer. With the transfer of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) to the Department of Homeland Security in 2003, FEMA also acquired the authority to activate NDMS to meet the medical needs of the victims of a public health emergency. In addition, NDMS is a support entity/asset to HHS, the Primary Coordinator and Primary Agency for ESF #8. Furthermore, HHS can ask DHS to activate the NDMS if there is a public health emergency, or NDMS can be activated pursuant to a request from either of the other NDMS statutory partners, DOD or VA.

Through FEMA's mitigation grant programs -- Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and the post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), FEMA provides funds and technical assistance to develop State and Local Mitigation Plans (LMP), which assess the communities' risks and vulnerabilities and propose mitigation solutions to reduce those risks. Mitigation planning needs to be included as part of a community's overall planning effort. By having an LMP, communities have a better understanding of their risks and an awareness of the infrastructure and properties vulnerable to those risks, and can apply for mitigation funding when it is made available under the mitigation grant programs mentioned. Mitigation grant programs are funded on a 75 percent Federal and 25 percent State or local cost-share basis. For example, following Hurricane Bob, the State of Rhode Island used FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to repair a pump at a hurricane barrier, acquire communications equipment and generators for critical facilities, and to initiate local mitigation planning for Rhode Island cities and towns.

The role of FEMA, DHS, and other Federal, State, local, tribal and private sector partners is further outlined in the National Response Plan (NRP), the nation's all-discipline, all-hazard plan for establishing a single, comprehensive framework for the management of all domestic incidents. FEMA and DHS' new Preparedness Directorate coordinate initiatives that include planning and technical assistance for State, local and tribal governments, and provide support to National Incident Management System (NIMS) implementation and the National Emergency Management Baseline Capability Assessment Program. Further, FEMA operates the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), a national training center for emergency planning, exercise design, and incident command operations for Federal, State, local, tribal and private sector individuals.

By Presidential Directive, FEMA also has lead agent responsibilities for developing guidance for and assisting the other Federal departments and agencies and the State and local jurisdictions in their continuity of operations or COOP preparedness. FEMA has a very aggressive program for providing assistance to these organizations, and the success of this program at the Federal level during the hurricanes of 2005 was due in large part to the successful establishment of continuity of operations working groups in the areas impacted by the hurricanes and the COOP training and exercise activities that were completed before the hurricanes. In preparation for the 2006 hurricane season, FEMA has increased its emphasis on preparedness at the State and local levels with COOP training and exercise activities scheduled across the Gulf Coast and along the eastern seaboard in thirteen States (Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York (including participants from New Jersey),

and Massachusetts; four island territories (Puerto Rico, St Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John) and the District of Columbia.

Protocols and Coordination in a Disaster: Chain of Command

FEMA is placing a great deal of emphasis on strengthening the Federal-State partnership to expedite response and hasten recovery. Disaster response always starts at the local level. When the local government is overwhelmed, it asks the State for support and when the State is overwhelmed, support is requested from DHS/FEMA and the Federal government. Effective emergency management requires a team approach and this partnership needs to include all levels of government and all disciplines of emergency management and response.

As I just described, under the Stafford Act, FEMA is authorized to supplement the efforts and available resources of States and local governments in responding to an Emergency or Major Disaster declared by the President. FEMA can lean forward and move Federal teams, commodities, supplies, and equipment to Federal facilities, but we cannot actually provide assistance under the law, unless the Governor asks, certifying that the event is beyond the State's capability and the President declares an Emergency or Major Disaster. Disaster relief commodities and equipment that may be necessary and made available are pre-positioned in a number of logistics facilities and mobile support locations, strategically placed across the nation.

The Stafford Act acknowledges the Constitutional authority of a State to respond to incidents within that State through the State's Emergency Management Agency or similar agency, which incorporates the States' mutual aid system and principles of the Incident Command System, and provides the structure through which State and local government agencies respond. The State Emergency Management Agency coordinates the overall management of an emergency to include requests for support and resources from other State agencies, from other States under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), and for supplemental assistance from the Federal government.

In advance of a hurricane, FEMA has the authority and capability to pre-position response teams and disaster supplies close to the projected impact area and will activate the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). The NRCC, a component of the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC), is the multi-agency center based at FEMA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., that provides overall coordination of the Federal response and supports emergency management program implementation. The NRCC brings together Emergency Support Function (ESF) Federal departments and agencies under the NRP to assist in the preparations for and response to disasters and issuance of mission assignments for disaster support. The NRCC also activates the Hurricane Liaison Team to facilitate the exchange of information between emergency managers and the National Hurricane Center/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration elements. It also deploys national-level heavy response assets such as the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Task Forces, and Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) assets; supports field facilities; oversees and prioritizes disaster relief supply and equipment allocations in coordination with the appropriate ESFs, Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC), Joint Field Offices (JFO) and other facilities. In an Incident of National Significance, Mission Assignments are issued

from FEMA to the appropriate ESF Coordinator/Primary Agency. For NDMS support, FEMA would be tasked by HHS as the ESF # 8 Coordinator/Primary Agency in response to a Mission Assignment from FEMA under the NRP; however, NDMS can also be activated at DHS' own initiative, or pursuant to a request from either of the other NDMS statutory partners, DOD or VA.

At the Regional level, the impacted FEMA Region follows established response protocols to activate the RRCC including ESF personnel, as appropriate, and to deploy a State Liaison Officer (SLO) and Emergency Response Team-Advanced (ERT-A) personnel to begin pre-landfall coordination with State emergency management officials to address life saving and life sustaining response requirements. FEMA headquarters, as needed, may deploy an Emergency Response Team National (ERT-N) to supplement Regional staff for more significant events. The SLO coordinates disaster response support and related operational activities with the State during emergency operations and supports exercises and other emergency management planning activities during non-disaster periods. The ERT-A team members work with their State counterparts to assess and help meet State resource needs. The RRCC works with the ERT-A and affected State to identify critical infrastructure facilities responsible for life sustaining services and the State's needs for relief supplies and other assistance in areas such as evacuation and housing. This process is facilitated by the ESF leads. For example, the Department of Transportation provides transportation and evacuation support, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides assistance with debris removal and other public works requirements, and the Department of Health and Human Services provides health and medical support.

Once a facility is ready and prepared for staff, a Joint Field Office (JFO) is opened to carry out and support the disaster response and recovery efforts closer to the disaster area. The JFO is a temporary Federal facility that provides the central point for Federal, State, local, and tribal executives with responsibility for incident oversight, direction, and/or assistance to effectively coordinate protection, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery actions.

2006 Hurricane Season Improvements

The historic 2005 Hurricane Season challenged FEMA as never before. The agency supported the largest evacuation in U.S. history, coordinated the delivery of approximately four times the amount of water and two times the amount of ice delivered for all four Florida hurricanes combined in 2004, coordinated the rescue of 36,000 individuals using U.S. Coast Guard and FEMA Urban Search & Rescue teams, and provided temporary housing assistance to an unprecedented 825,000 families displaced from their homes. Hurricane Katrina, a truly catastrophic disaster, resulted in a record response from all levels of government. The lessons learned by FEMA in responding to Katrina and the other hurricanes have proven to be invaluable in helping us improve for the upcoming hurricane season.

FEMA is approaching the 2006 Hurricane Season with a renewed sense of commitment and urgency, building on 27 years of disaster response experience and coordination, a solid foundation of skilled professionals, and the lessons learned from last year's unprecedented experiences. We will be aggressively leaning forward and ready to respond to any hurricanes we

face during the upcoming hurricane season. We are confident in our people, our experience and the improvements we made immediately in 2005 and since in preparing for 2006. Innovative and effective techniques and technologies that were employed in the response to Hurricanes Rita and Wilma have been institutionalized. Several key initiatives are underway that will be in place and improve FEMA's capabilities for the 2006 Hurricane Season.

FEMA Retooling

As a result of intensive collaborative analyses of response and recovery programs post-Katrina, as well as actions taken to address recommendations made in the White House report *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, DHS Inspector General's Report, Congressional Reports, and other reports, FEMA has taken steps to retool its capabilities and is implementing multiple new and improved measures in the areas of logistics, emergency communications, situational awareness, housing, and victim management designed to strengthen essential functions so we can more effectively respond to all disasters. These improvements include building a 21st century disaster supply tracking system; establishing advanced contracts and vendor lists for commodities for greater surge capability; ensuring replenishment of our disaster supplies; implementing a strategic commodity pre-positioning plan; taking measures to ensure a better operational picture and situational awareness from the field; coordinating and planning more closely with DOD; signing an agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency for logistics support; upgrading the NRCC and the Region IV and VI RRCCs; improving the coordination between the NRCC and the HSOC; enhancing communications capabilities and interoperability; taking measures to improve management and deployment of the disaster workforce; enhancing our ability to receive requests for individual assistance, expediting the pace of debris removal, and developing an smarter plan for long-term housing.

All of these improvements will supplement the experience and skills of FEMA employees with 21st century tools and technology that will help make FEMA a more agile organization and maximize our performance for all types of disasters regardless of size, cause or complexity.

FEMA will be ready for this year's hurricane season. And we understand the need to work closely with the Gulf Coast States, and have been doing so, to address their special needs in the areas of evacuation, housing and law enforcement.

Availability of DHS Assets:

Over the last few months, the Secretary, Acting FEMA Director Paulison, and other members of the Department's leadership team have been meeting with senior elected officials in hurricane prone States as part of a broad outreach effort to highlight the Department's commitment to improved emergency preparedness and management and readiness for the hurricane season.

There are many capabilities within DHS available to support and augment FEMA's disaster response activities. Acting Director Paulison has built personal relationships, not only with Secretary Chertoff and Deputy Secretary Jackson, but also with the heads of the Preparedness Directorate, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, the Customs and Border Protection

agency, the Coast Guard and other critical DHS components. These relationships will generate closer coordination among DHS components, leveraging FEMA's assets and abilities tremendously.

The Secretary and Acting Director Paulison have already pre-designated five leadership teams to ensure better coordination of the Federal government's response and recovery efforts in support of State and local partners. The five teams will draw on the expertise of 27 Federal officials designated as PFOs, Deputy PFOs, and FCOs and will be assigned to the Gulf Coast Region, Florida, the Northeast region, the Mid-Atlantic region, and Texas. The PFOs and DPFOs will serve as the Secretary's representative on the ground and primary point of contact for State and local officials within their area of authority. All of these Federal government representatives will support State and local governments and will improve FEMA's and the Department's ability to respond quickly and delineate roles more effectively. Additionally, Infrastructure Liaison Officials have been identified by the DHS Infrastructure Protection Directorate to support the designated PFOs, Deputy PFOs and FCOs to improve coordination between State and local partners and the private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure. The relationship between the PFO and FCO, JTF, and other entities have been more clearly defined and established. Improved coordination procedures and protocols and reporting processes have also been worked out between the NRCC and the HSOC. Measures have been taken to put communications and operation systems in place that will ensure "unity of effort, unity of command" through rigorous adherence to the principles of NIMS.

Improved Coordination with Department of Defense (DOD)

To ensure better synchronization, coordination, and readiness with the military, whose personnel and capabilities can be critical in a major disaster response, FEMA and the DOD are placing a Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) - typically deployed as lead field coordinator for the DOD at the time of a disaster – permanently in each of FEMA's ten regional offices for ongoing preparedness and response coordination in disasters. This will improve Federal coordination in the immediate response and smooth out and expedite the provision of DOD support. FEMA is also streamlining the way it seeks assistance from the DOD by pre-scripting mission assignments in advance of the hurricane season so that time is not lost during the critical response period. 18 pre-scripted Mission Assignments involving such functions as airlift, transportation, communications, imagery, route clearance, housing and feeding, fuel distribution, staging and mobilization center, and medical treatment support have been prepared.

An acting or permanent Defense Coordinating Officer will be in place in every FEMA Region by June 1, 2006, to facilitate coordination with DOD. In addition, the Regions maintain close coordination with the Regional Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer staff.

Operational Capability Upgrades

FEMA's NRCC is being upgraded to improve its disaster response and coordination capabilities. New equipment, video capabilities, and software have been installed to improve the interface,

coordination, and exchange of information with the DHS HSOC and with State and local emergency managers. In addition to the improvements to the NRCC's information technology systems, audio-visual equipment, and Video Tele-Conference (VTC) capabilities, upgrades are being made to the FEMA Region IV (Atlanta) and Region VI (Denton) RRCCs to improve their disaster response operational coordination and information exchange capabilities.

Improved Situational Awareness

In addition to deploying FEMA Emergency Response Teams to State emergency operations centers to establish unified incident command, response liaisons will be deployed with satellite phone capability to key local emergency operations centers to coordinate with local officials and report information from the local level. This concept was successfully used in the responses to Hurricanes Rita and Wilma and will be continued in this year's hurricane season.

DHS's capabilities will be further enhanced with the introduction of the Department's new Situational Awareness Teams (DSATs) with interoperable communications assets. The DSATs are designed to provide the DHS Secretary with situational awareness and real time disaster activity information from the heart of the disaster. In addition, FEMA is currently staffing two new Federal Incident Response Support Teams (FIRST) that will become operational during the summer of 2006. FIRST Teams and equipment are designed to provide DHS/FEMA with the capability to support directly State, local, and tribal government disaster operations on scene as well as providing communications support and situational awareness to the State and DHS/FEMA decision makers. FIRST teams are small, rapidly deployable teams that can provide technical advice, situational awareness, facilitate alternative communications, and assist in requesting and employing lifesaving Federal assets. To enhance support for the DSATs and FIRSTs, survivable and interoperable communications capabilities are being augmented and greater emphasis is being placed on the types and availability of communications equipment, frequency management, and cross-coordination of operational support capability. The ultimate goal is for the information gathered by the DSATs and the FIRSTs to be shared and coordinated at all levels. The DSAT role upon direction of the PFO is to fill specific gaps in situational awareness when other resources are not available or appropriate.

Operational Response

Our 28 Federal Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces and 77 National Disaster Medical System teams are ready for deployment to support the needs of disaster victims and first responders where needed. In addition to these response assets, FEMA headquarters staff, including FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue staff, continues to work with DHS entities and other Federal agencies, such as the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of the Interior (Park Service), to agree on roles, responsibilities and available resources for expanding the scope and capabilities for Federal support to search and rescue efforts. The search and rescue capabilities of the Federal government will be fully integrated. At the national level, efforts are underway to integrate search and rescue capabilities. Throughout the Gulf Coast, efforts have been taken to better blend the capabilities of Coast Guard, Federal military, State National Guard,, and local police and fire departments to improve search and rescue capabilities.

FEMA's Concept of Operations for the 2006 Hurricane Season will be ready June 1, 2006. As part of this 2006 plan, FEMA is working with the primary and supporting ESF agencies to identify the tasks that should be accomplished starting 96 or more hours before a storm strikes, then 72 hours, 48 hours, etc. to ensure that all Federal supporting and operational functions are synchronized in the response. FEMA plans to activate more assets (teams and commodities) sooner and place them closer to anticipated landfall, while keeping them safe, though we recognize that with the variables of hurricanes this is always a challenge.

Augmenting Survivable and Interoperable Communications Capabilities

FEMA is participating in the DHS-lead Emergency Communications Working Group (ECWG), of which NCS is also a participant. Additionally, FEMA CIO and the Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Program Manager maintain a working relationship with the NCS.

Communications capabilities must remain in place for emergency response officials even when all other communications have been devastated by a disaster. In addition to increased deployment of satellite phones with emergency response staff, FEMA is augmenting current capabilities with High-Frequency (HF) equipment, such as Land Mobile Radios, disaster satellite communications and mobile communications. FEMA is participating in interoperability exercises and tests both before June 1, 2006 and after. These exercises validate interoperability among Federal, State and local emergency management officials and include DICE (Defense Interoperability Exercise/Testing) which occurred in February and March 2006, TOPOFF Forward Challenge (a national-level command post and full scale Continuity of Operations Plans exercise) which will occur the week of June 19, 2006, Grecian Firebolt '06 (Joint Secure Communications exercise) on June 12-24, 2006, and JUICE '06 (Joint User Interoperability Communications Exercise) in August of 2006. FEMA MERS also tests its readiness in a series of readiness capability (REDCAP) exercises that occurred in October of 2005 and will occur in July 2006. All of these measures will improve the ability of disaster responders at all levels to communicate with each other during disaster responses.

DHS is developing communications plans that improve the coordination of the delivery of communications resources to an impacted area. These plans ensure the coordination of the full range of communications capabilities from the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal government and commercial industry to meet the needs. In the event of a hurricane, communication resources will be pre-deployed to staging areas surrounding the expected landfall. These resources will then be promptly dispatched to an effected area when requested. These communications plans will support command and control, evacuation, search and rescue.

FEMA's Emergency Alert System/Warning Initiatives

Congress has approved \$5 million in supplemental funding, , and is currently considering an additional request for \$70 million in supplemental funds, with which FEMA's Office of National Security Coordination is implementing through the following initiatives:

- Radio Station in a Box - The Radio Station in a Box (RIB) will be used to communicate official news and information to disaster area residents and officials when local radio broadcast capabilities have been disrupted by a major disaster. The RIB will be a rapidly deployable, AM and FM radio transmitter system that can be tuned to the frequencies of disrupted FM and most AM radio stations. The RIB will have an integral radio studio and can also use satellite communications for linking remote broadcast studio facilities. The RIB will be housed in a trailer capable of being brought to the disaster region by truck or by air transport.
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) Primary Entry Point (PEP) Radio Station Improvements - Funds will be used to upgrade the existing Houston and New Orleans PEP radio stations and to provision other PEP stations (such as two new ones in Mississippi and Alabama). PEP radio stations are provisioned by the federal government with fuel, generators and other capabilities that allow them to stay on the air in times of disasters. For example, the WWL station in New Orleans had on-site fuel and backup power generators provided by FEMA that enabled this station to continue operations throughout Hurricane Katrina. New equipment to be purchased will include power generator systems and fuel storage tanks. Funds will also be used to close out existing discrepancies at the PEP stations.
- FEMA National Radio (FNARS) will provide for continuation of Phase I of the FNARS high-frequency (HF) radio system modernization to the Katrina affected States. The modernization will help to replace logistically unsupportable equipment and will add new capabilities such as secure e-mail and user-friendly operator interfaces. The FNARS is designed to back up landline based systems and ensure continued connectivity between the Federal, State, and territorial governments in times of commercial telecommunications infrastructure outage.
- National Warning System (NAWAS) satellite capability - Funds will be used to field a satellite-based NAWAS capability for the Katrina affected States. The current National Warning System (NAWAS) is a private line telephone system used to convey warnings and other information to Federal, State, and local governments. To improve the security, reliability, and survivability of the NAWAS system, independent satellite paths will be used for connectivity within the network and will provide a collaborative environment with text, voice, video, and data services that can operate through floods and other hazardous conditions.
- Emergency cellular and land mobile radio relay vans - During Hurricane Katrina, over 1,000 cell towers were disrupted and both cellular and land mobile radio relays were flooded or damaged throughout a multi-State region. Funds will be used for purchasing contingency cell telephone Switch on Wheels (SOWs) and Cell on Wheels (COWs) with mobile cell towers and land mobile radio relay capabilities. These SOWs and COWs can receive E911 calls from the public and first responders, will help to locate people in distress, and will provide a satellite based backhaul into the public telephone and cellular networks. The SOWs will also enable the government to send out broadcast text alert messages to cell phones in a disaster area. The end result will be an assured cellular

network for government and first responders that is also helpful to the public. Each SOW and COW will include phones and will also integrate VHF, UHF, and SHF land mobile radio (LMR) interoperable radio relay capabilities. Two or more COWs will support one SOW and extend the range of the SOWs.

- Public Address Bulletin Boards & Voice Systems - During Hurricane Katrina, there was a lack of situational awareness and alerting for the displaced public, especially in shelters and during evacuation. Funds will provide 30 trailers with roadside electronic bulletin board capabilities. In addition, funds will provide 30 trailer mounted public address systems to improve situational awareness in large public shelters.
- Deploy the Geo-Targeted Alerting System (GTAS) to the Katrina-affected States - During disasters, the Federal government does not have a geo-targeted alerting capability to warn the public via telephones or cellular phones that they are in harms way. GTAS is a joint DHS and NOAA program to help warn the public in specific danger zones, whether the zone covers an entire city or is focused on a particular building or neighborhood. The GTAS will integrate near-real-time weather and hazard predictions with collaborative alert zone determinations. The GTAS will provide Federal, State, and local officials a capability to precisely target alerts to those who are most at risk. Funds will help to deploy an initial GTAS capability to the Katrina affected States.
- Deploy Digital EAS capabilities to the Katrina affected States - The Digital EAS (DEAS) enables the government to use public television's digital broadcasts to send out text, voice, and video alerts. These alerts can be sent to public shelters, roadside signs, and numerous other devices that have a capability to either directly receive these broadcasts or that can receive DEAS alert messages through approved relay sites. This request would fund the deployment of a mobile DEAS transmitter van for use in an area where the public TV station is disrupted and also will help with the DEAS provisioning of public television affiliates in the Katrina affected States.
- Deploy DHS internet-based alerting for the Katrina affected States - The DHS Web Alert and Relay Network (WARN) will provide the Federal government with a capability to alert the public through an opt-in web based alerting service and other web based services. The DHS WARN will provide the public with warning information based on location (such as a zip code) and type of event (flood, tornado, explosion, etc.). The DHS WARN will send out alerts via emails, pagers, and other electronic devices. This system will also provide other vetted alert and warning information on the DHS WARN website for the general public.
- Mobile Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Coordination Centers - Three IPAWS Coordination Centers will provide mobile facilities with collaborative alert and warning displays and would serve to coordinate Federal, State, and local warnings over other public warning systems (such as the EAS, GTAS, DHS WARN, SOWs, and DEAS networks described above). In addition, these IPAWS Coordination Centers will provide connectivity to the Homeland Security Operations Center, the FEMA Operations Center, and to NOAA Operations Centers.

- FEMA National Radio (FNARS) and satellite-based National Warning System (NAWAS) deployments - FNARS and NAWAS funding will provide additional communications and collaboration capabilities to the Katrina affected States. These funds will help to replace logistically unsupportable equipment and will add new capabilities such as secure e-mail, user-friendly operator interfaces, and collaborative environments with text, voice, video, and data services that can operate through floods and other hazardous conditions. The FNARS is designed to back up landline based systems and ensure continued connectivity between the Federal, State, and territorial governments in times of commercial telecommunications infrastructure outage. The new, satellite-based NAWAS will improve the security, reliability, and survivability of the NAWAS and will also provide converged text, voice, and video collaboration capabilities.

Improved Logistics

FEMA is working hard to develop an improved logistics capability. Our goal is to develop a sophisticated, efficient, agile national logistics supply system capable of meeting emergent needs, responsive to trends, and anticipating long-term requirements. We are collaborating with our partners to achieve total system integrity and visibility and accountability over select disaster resources. We want to ensure that the right commodities can be provided at the right time to meet victim needs.

More specifically, FEMA has improved its logistics and commodity distribution capabilities by replenishing and restocking essential disaster commodities at logistics and staging facilities. FEMA headquarters signed an agreement in March with the Defense Logistics Agency to ensure procurement, delivery, and vendor managed inventories to ensure the availability of stockpiles of emergency meals, water, and plastic sheeting, as well as medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to assist FEMA's National Disaster Medical System and Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces.

For this year's hurricane season, there will be greater emphasis on providing commercial type meals with packaging similar to that used for Meals Ready to Eat but that are better matched to the general population's nutritional and caloric requirements. In addition to replenishing and restocking essential disaster commodities such as water, ice, fuel, generators and tarps that FEMA has on hand at logistics and staging areas across the United States, FEMA has been and will be working with vendors to have a ready supply of needed commodities and assets for surge capability beyond FEMA's "on hand" capacity.

FEMA has implemented a program to improve its visibility of disaster assets and commodities from requisition to delivery of disaster commodities within States, thus enhancing logistics management. This new capability, the Total Asset Visibility Project: Phase I, will provide FEMA with an improved ability to manage its inventory of certain commodities and to track the location of trailers carrying commodities such as water, ice, emergency meals, plastic sheeting, tarps, generators, cots, blankets, Joint Field Office kits, and material handling equipment distributed from the FEMA Logistics Centers in FEMA Region IV (Atlanta) and Region VI (Fort Worth). This tracking will provide real time status to FEMA and the states being assisted by this

supplemental federal assistance and will result in more effective and efficient delivery of relief supplies to disaster victims. FEMA will continue its efforts to expand this tracking system to encompass other centers. Plans are to expand this capability to the other Regions.

Building on a strong system of strategic pre-positioning of federal commodities developed in the last two years for quick deployment of assets to hurricane-prone states, FEMA has been closely coordinating with the States to improve commodity delivery. We are doing a lot of pre-positioning for this hurricane season. States have been providing detailed information to FEMA regarding precise staging areas and points of distribution to the most valuable pre-decided locations to best reach populations in need. States will take ownership of Federal commodities and are charged with their distribution to individual citizens. FEMA has taken a forward leaning approach to pre-positioning. A strategic pre-positioning plan has been completed and assets are being pre-positioned based on regional planning that considers the needs/requirements of the States, yet provides for a flexible servicing. While assets will be pre-positioned based on the needs of each State, the presence of goods (MREs, helicopters, ice, etc.) in one State does not mean that those assets are assigned exclusively to that state.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Integration Center (NIC)

In FY 2006, the NIMS Integration Center will work with the Response and Recovery Divisions to ensure operational readiness for disasters of all kinds, regardless of cause. The NIC also will coordinate and broker agency and interagency planning initiatives in support of operational response and recovery objectives for the NIMS.

NIMS ICS Train the Trainer courses are being conducted in all States and Territories. Approximately, 1.8 million first responders and disaster workers have completed the NIMS training. The NIC will also be offering several new training programs in support of disaster response: NIMS Multi-Agency Coordination System, NIMS Public Information System, and NIMS Resource Management will be released prior to the start of the FY06 hurricane season. Training will be available via internet and downloadable for classroom use. Training courses on NIMS Communications & Information Management, NIMS Preparedness, NIMS Resource Typing, and NIMS Mutual Aid will be released this summer.

In FY 2006, the NIC will maintain and continue to refine the NIMS and its components over the long term. The NIC will provide the central activity to ensure that the NIMS is a continuously improving system of response that unites all responders in the United States through common organizations, common terminology for resources, and interoperable equipment and communications. These activities will be constantly evaluated and improved based on lessons learned and on the evolution of technology and protocols as directed in HSPD-5. The NIC will begin to develop and deliver a national mutual aid and resource management system that includes first responder and emergency worker credentialing based on national standards, that supports the NIMS, and that allows Federal, State, and local governments to order and to track response resources quickly and effectively.

Following consultation with our State and Federal partners, the NIMS guidance document will be upgraded based on lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and will be released, along with the FY07 NIMS Compliance Requirements, by October 1, 2006. Currently, the NIC is working with DHS's Office of Grants and Training to monitor the states' NIMS compliance for the FY05 State Homeland Security Grant Program. FY06 NIMS Compliance will be monitored in FY07 by the NIC in partnership with the DHS Office of Grants & Training, and will focus on 23 specific compliance activities

Training Employees for Disaster Readiness

FEMA is participating in a number of different training sessions and conferences with our Federal, State, and local partners designed to help communities respond and recover from disasters. FEMA will train 3,000 disaster "generalist" surge cadre employees for ready deployment during the height of the 2006 hurricane season and is increasing its capacity to deploy and communicate with the increased number of disaster employees. These surge employees will form a "generalist" pool of disaster workers and will be trained in a number of basic functions cutting across traditional program areas including Community Relations, Individual Assistance, Public Assistance and Logistics. The training is taking place now and will continue through the summer, and is being drawn from the training programs already developed by the various program areas and supplemented with basic information about FEMA's goals, mission and programs.

Through these generalists, FEMA will have a pool of disasters workers ready to respond quickly to large or catastrophic disasters, performing a variety of basic but important functions such as quickly canvassing areas immediately following a disaster to inform citizens of FEMA's programs, assessing the community's needs, and serving as strike team members for shelter or hotel populations. In turn, this ability to draw upon a large pool of generalists will free up FEMA's more specialized and experienced workers to provide the expertise required for more complex problems specific to the particular disaster.

Participation in Exercises, Partnership Events, and Coordination Conferences

In addition to ongoing preparations with State and local officials, FEMA headquarters and regional staff are participating in regional hurricane preparedness exercises to test improvements made since last year's hurricane season and to identify areas that require additional coordination before the start of hurricane season. The table-top exercises are focusing on several key preparedness and disaster response functions, including evacuations, sheltering, National Response Plan implementation, and National Incident Management System activation. Senior level Catastrophic Assessment Task Force exercises were held by the White House to integrate the various initiatives emerging from the White House Katrina Lessons Learned report into an assessment of the current state of national preparedness for the 2006 hurricane season. These efforts provide forums to consolidate the lessons learned from after action reports and conferences and to facilitate validation of revised coordination and response plans addressing specific challenges that could arise if another catastrophic storm strikes during the 2006

Hurricane Season. FEMA staff have also conducted Emergency Support Function Leaders Group meetings, participated in numerous State emergency management/hurricane preparedness conferences and meetings, and participated in other activities with the ESFs to prepare for and synchronize activities for the upcoming hurricane season.

To support its continuity of operations or COOP lead agent responsibilities, FEMA has also developed a national COOP outreach program focused on assisting Federal, State and local jurisdictions in their continuity preparedness. To support this effort, continuity of operations working groups (CWGs) have been established in the national capital region and in many of our largest cities across the country. FEMA's goal is to establish these working groups in all 50 States and territories by FY 2008. The CWGs established with the Federal Executive Boards in New Orleans, Houston, and Miami prior to the hurricanes of 2005, for example, and the many COOP training and exercise activities conducted by these organizations prior to the hurricanes, were instrumental in facilitating the Federal government's timely recovery and reconstitution efforts following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

Planning for Special Needs Populations

FEMA is undertaking a coordinated emergency preparedness planning effort in partnership with the Office of Equal Rights, as well as State and local officials. This effort requires the expertise of the Office of Equal Rights, as well as the resources of the FEMA program divisions, to work with State and local officials to develop plans for immediate and adequate sheltering and housing of people with disabilities; and to develop accessible resources to provide information about FEMA programs and assistance, as well as about available disability support organizations. Additional responsibilities include developing processes for quickly restoring assistive and adaptive implements, planning which enables reconnection with medical facilities and pharmacies for ongoing medical needs, and developing plans which facilitate restoration of the support system which enables people with disabilities to resume their normal functioning as quickly as possible.

Key factors in this planning are evaluation of demographics and community based resources within the impacted area, and identification of disability advocacy groups, disability support groups, and state and local resources responsible for evacuating, housing, and responding to the needs of the disability population. This information in real time is integrated into operations to facilitate coordination of resources and requirements.

Preparedness for people with disabilities is integrated into both program guidance and specific training for State and local Emergency Management Agencies and for service and advocacy agencies and organizations that work with them. These organizations cooperated with FEMA's Training Division and Office of Equal Rights in development of public information and education materials, and in development training and guidance for emergency management system disability support personnel at all levels.

Medical evacuations are also a particular concern for special needs populations. The National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) is a statutory Federal partnership to supplement State/local

medical resources during disasters, major emergencies or military contingencies. The NDMS Federal Partners are the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), Health and Human Services (HHS), Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). Each of the NDMS Federal Partners has a specific role in the mission. The Department of Defense is responsible to coordinate/facilitate patient movement. NDMS patient movement begins at an Aeromedical Staging facility co-located with an airfield. Patients present to the NDMS site for evaluation and treatment. Patients arrive at the NDMS site via personal or local transportation assets. Patients that require care beyond the local capacity may be regulated to an NDMS receiving facility outside the local area. The patient would be transferred via NDMS DOD assets to an NDMS DOD or VA Federal Coordinating Center. The FCC would re-regulate the patient to an NDMS participating civilian facility and coordinate the transport to the NDMS participating facility. All movement by ground, helicopter or other local assets is coordinated by the local EMS. NDMS is not configured to perform patient extraction or local transportation.

FEMA's Recovery Initiatives for 2006

Many of FEMA's processes that have worked well in the past on smaller disasters have been tested and challenged. We sought to try new and innovative ways of service delivery in an effort to speed much-needed assistance into the hands of individual victims and State and local governments. While FEMA has made significant strides in addressing the Individual and Public Assistance needs of victims across the country, it has come through trial and error. FEMA is always looking to improve service delivery, and we all realize events such as Hurricane Katrina and Rita help us identify those processes and programs that work well in a catastrophic event, and improve on other processes. Some of the more immediate tangible initiatives that FEMA's Recovery Division is working to address are described below.

Improving Shelter Population Management — FEMA is working with the American Red Cross, the nation's largest operator of major congregate shelters during disasters, to develop and improve methods to better identify and more quickly assist those who have evacuated to a congregate shelter. Immediately following a Presidentially declared disaster, this tracking capability will assist FEMA and the Red Cross in further developing and implementing methods for quickly identifying and reunifying missing and separated children and family members during a disaster.

Increasing Registration Capacity — During the days and weeks following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA surpassed 100,000 registrations a day, shattering all previous records of intake. While call center capacity was ramped to its highest levels ever, FEMA is pursuing even more robust contract and contingency surge capabilities that will quickly allow for rapid expansion to a registration intake capacity of up to 200,000 per day. FEMA Internet-based registration capability will be increased by improving accessibility, allowing FEMA to handle more registrations than ever before. This will help reduce registration wait times and FEMA Helpline information delays following a major disaster.

Piloting Deployable Mobile Registration Intake Centers (MRICs) — Recognizing that many disaster victims may be stranded or in congregate shelters with no communications, and unable to register for assistance, FEMA is enhancing an aggressive, new program in the 2006 hurricane

season that uses Mobile Registrations Intake Centers that will immediately deploy to congregate shelter populations and other individuals displaced in the aftermath of a disaster and provide an on-site capability to quickly register for FEMA assistance.

Enhanced Identity Verification During Registration – While FEMA’s primary concern is always the disaster victim, FEMA is committed to being a good steward of taxpayer dollars. In order to improve our stewardship responsibilities while simultaneously reducing the delays associated with disaster victim identity verification, FEMA is working to put resources in place to conduct rapid identity checks during the registration process providing another – but expedient – layer of verification surety to the ID check process and helping to further minimize waste, fraud and abuse.

Expanding Home Inspections Capacity – For many applicants, moving forward in the recovery process does not begin until they are able to get back into their homes. Some are reluctant to do so until an inspector has visited their home. In the coming year, FEMA hopes to nearly triple the daily home inspection capacity from 7,000 per day to 20,000 per day. This added capacity – combined with a newly established third party evaluation of inspections performed on victims’ damaged homes – will increase the speed and accuracy of home inspections that determine the FEMA repair and replacement grants for which a victim may be eligible.

Improved Speed and Suitability of Temporary Housing – FEMA is developing updated policies to improve and quicken determination of applicant eligibility for FEMA’s Individuals and Households Assistance Program (IHP) along with determining eligibility for Expedited Assistance. Additionally, FEMA is clarifying the policy on the appropriate use and authorization of emergency sheltering funds (403 assistance) and individual housing assistance funds (Stafford Act Section 408 assistance) for disaster victims. These improvements will streamline the applicants’ eligibility determination and speed the provision of temporary housing units to eligible victims.

Debris Removal Process Enhancements- The expeditious removal of debris is critical to the ability of a community and its residents to quickly recover from disaster. In Hurricane Katrina, the debris volume was unprecedented. FEMA’s Recovery Division is developing Debris Removal Process Enhancements to ensure that policies are applied consistently for cost-sharing for federal contracting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local government contracting. Further, FEMA is establishing a website where debris removal contractors licensed in particular states can post their contact information in order to help states and local communities better plan for and more rapidly respond to debris removal requirements in times of disaster. In addition, FEMA has developed guidance for local government debris removal contractors and is conducting a training session titled “Debris: Contracting, Monitoring, and Demolition” at the National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, Fla. This will help reduce the confusion surrounding debris removal contractors and debris removal eligibility and allow debris removal operations to move ahead more quickly and with greater financial integrity.

Conclusion

It has been a challenging eight months since Hurricane Katrina made landfall – for victims, communities, states, voluntary agencies, and the federal government. Preparation for improved emergency management must be a consistent process. FEMA will continue to make additional significant enhancements beyond this hurricane season to help further strengthen the Nation’s preparedness and ability to respond and recover from disasters, whatever their cause. We look forward to continuing our partnerships with the States, tribal and local governments, as well as the private sector, community organizations and individuals in identifying their roles and responsibilities. Together, we will strengthen our ability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from catastrophic events.

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.